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ABSTRACT

This document contains three symposium papers on individual differences in learning. "Creek Women's Perceptions of Work: A Qualitative Study" (Barbara Bussell Kawulich, Carol D. Hansen), which is an ethnographic study, discusses differences between the value systems held by Creek women and those of the mainstream population. "Subordinates' Information Seeking Behavior: Empirical Investigation of the Effect of Perceived Leadership Style and Individual Differences" (Svjetlana Madzar), which is based on a field study, shows general support for the hypothesis that the content and frequency of information seeking by subordinates from their superiors will depend on the individual superior's leadership style. "An Empirical Study of Age Discrimination in Teacher Selection with Application to HRD [Human Resource Development]" (Jeffry S. Bowman, Kiyoe Harada) reports on a study that found possible age discrimination when matched ages were used for hypothetical elementary teacher applicants and elementary principals to determine whether principals' evaluations of applicants were influenced by principal and applicant ages. (MN)

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28 **Individual Differences in Learning**

Chair: Dennis G.Tesolowski, Clemson University

28-1 Creek Women's Perceptions of Work: A Qualitative Study

Barbara Bussell Kawulich, Georgia State University

Carol D. Hansen, Georgia State University

28-2 The Effect of Perceptual Learning Style and Self-efficacy on Preferred Instructional Methods in an Advanced Technical Program: A Comparison of Computer Based Training and Lecture

Daniel L. Parry, University of Louisville

28-3 Subordinates' Information Seeking Behavior: Empirical Investigation of the Effect of Perceived Leadership Style and Individual Differences

Svjetlana Madzar, Gustavus Adolphus College

28-4 An Empirical Study of Age Discrimination in Teacher Selection with Application to HRD

Jeffry S. Bowman, Ohio State University

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Creek Women's Perceptions of Work: A Qualitative Study

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This ethnographic study of Muscogee (Creek) women's perceptions of work substantiated existing research indicating differences in the value systems held by this minority and those of the mainstream population. The result detail further how these and other differences may influence HRD professionals who work with and prepare these and other minority workers.

Keywords: Workforce Diversity, Culture, and Identity

As the workforce engages more minority women, in general, and more Native American women, in particular, practical and theoretical knowledge is required about how their motivational needs, patterns, and roles are framed by gender and cultural heritage. There is also a need to understand how to recruit, hire, place, and retain minority females. The participation of women of all races is expected to increase. By 2005, women are expected to make up 48% of the labor force (USDOL, No. 95-1, 1995). American Indians, along with Hispanics, Asians, Alaskan natives, and Pacific Islanders, are expected to see the most growth. These groups are projected to increase by 80% by 2005, while the participation of African American women in the workforce, for example, is expected to grow by only 34%.

This research studied the culture of Muscogee (Creek) women in central Oklahoma. The study's purpose was to give voice to a marginalized sector of America's workforce by exploring the work perceptions of Native American women, in general, and those of Creek women, in particular. Studies suggest that Native American value systems are different from that of the larger American culture (Brady, Crome & Reese, 1984; D'Andrea, 1994; Saks Berman, 1989). However, Native Americans have received little attention by organizational theorists. Research has tended to focus on social problems, such as alcohol abuse, dropout and suicide rates, instead of issues related to the workplace (Medicine, 1988). Another tendency has been to group all tribes into a single category without regard for socioeconomic status, tribal-specific structures, educational achievement, lifestyle patterns, or gender. As a result, no clear constructs have emerged. Medicine stressed that the differences in matrilineal and patrilineal family structures precluded a generalization of findings to all tribes. Such reporting accounted for much of the inconsistency and erroneous interpretations found in present research.

Study of Native Americans has been problematic for additional reasons. First, their numbers are small, and their influence historically has been less than that of other minority groups. According to the 1990 census, Native Americans, along with Alaskan natives and Pacific Islanders, make up about 3% of the population (US Census, 1990; USDOL, No 92-1, 1992). Second, there has been a tendency to group their cultural membership in the "white" category, which failed to appreciate their separate ethnicity (Kleinfeld & Kruse, 1982). This research included surveys conducted by the U. S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and much of the available research on gender work. Finally, many of these studies did not include labor that was not covered by employer taxes, such as volunteer work, unpaid work, home-based work, and self-employment. Thus, much current data does not acknowledge the large percentage of Native American women who are self-employed in home-based businesses that is higher than for the rest of the population. Almost 69% of Native American women-owned businesses are home-based (USDOL, No 89-9, 1989).

Theoretical Framework

Issues of workforce diversity, cultural identity, gender, and ethnicity framed the need for this study.

The term workforce diversity concerns issues of culture, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual and religious orientation, minority and social status, and physical and mental disabilities (Thomas, 1994). While any of these elements can lead to different work needs and approaches, perhaps the greatest cause of variance lies in one's cultural and ethnic origins. Work orientations develop at a young age and are greatly influenced by one's socio-cultural referents (Hofstede, 1994; Kelly, 1991; Patterson, Sochting & Marcia, 1992). In fact, one's cultural heritage

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may carry more weight in shaping occupational choices and definitions than organizational cultures (Hofstede, 1994; Laurent, 1986). Thus, a worker's cultural heritage is likely to play a larger role in shaping work approaches and expectations than the culture of the worker's employing organization.

Anthropologists traditionally have provided knowledge about culture. Since the early 1980's, organizational theorists also have found relevance in culture studies. Culture, as a construct of work, was defined in this study as:

> A learned, socially transmitted set of behavioral standards. It is self-expressed and shared by individuals through their personal values, norms, activities, attitudes, cognitive processes, interpretation of symbols, feelings, ideas, reactions, and morals (Morris, Davis & Allen, 1994, p. 70).

This definition suggests that, as a group's culture provides a framework for action and expectation of others, it gives members a sense of shared identity, a common past, and a sense of belonging. This framework provides the means for individuals to find meaning in life and for developing one's self-definition.

Identity is multifunctional and can be thought of in terms of group identity or in terms of individual identity, with the individual having several identities at various levels of relationships at once (Fitzgerald, 1974). One's cultural identity is her identity as part of a group based on cultural or ethnic association; her social identity is a less stable identity that is situation-specific (Fitzgerald, 1974). For example, a Creek woman's cultural identity, at all times, is Creek. However, with a co-worker she might have a social identity as a professional and a social identity as a friend to someone else. Cultural identity then implies stability, while social identities are adaptable, depending upon the situation. Because cultural identity provides a stable identity, while the social, situational identity is more flexible, one should consider the impact that cultural identity makes on the social identity as it relates to the workplace. Cultural identity upholds the values and belief systems one has; therefore, it is important for employers to know what the workers' individual cultures value in order for the employer to know how to motivate workers. In this way, employers can alleviate some of the problems associated with frequent employee turnover and dissatisfaction. For women who choose to become self-employed, the motivation again derives from the values and belief systems found in the context of culture.

Gender and Ethnicity as Products of Culture

Gender may be viewed as a learned function of socialization that is biologically assigned (Deegan, 1987; Goffman, 1987). Gender has been linked inextricably to class through its grounding in historical studies of the changes that have occurred in women's involvement in the workforce (Acker, 1989). Gender has been shown to mediate class through sex segregation of work and through the differences found in pay earned by males and females (Acker, 1989). How women, in general, are defined in the home and at work is changing (Deegan, 1987). The phenomena of change clearly characterize the roles of Native American women (LaFramboise, Heyle & Ozer, 1990).

Early feminist literature focused on the lack of attention paid to gender within existing theories (Franklin, Lury & Stacey, 1991). These feminists brought to light such concerns as male violence, sexuality and reproduction, and female oppression, in general, topics that had not been of interest in male-dominated research. While many of these studies emphasized the similarities among women's experience, Franklin et al. proposed that the differences in these experiences have been neglected as a result. The differences they pointed out that should be emphasized include ethnic identity, nationality, class and sexuality. Some feminist views supported the understanding of the oppression of women. These perspectives pointed out the differences in the patterns of the lives led by women and by men (Maynard, 1994). Reid and Comas-Diaz (1990) also found gender research inadequate by neglecting issues of ethnicity. Likewise, ethnic research typically failed to include gender issues. In their review of the gender literature, Reid and Comas-Diaz found that, professionally, women were not valued equally with men, either monetarily or intellectually. Women were found to experience stress and low self-esteem in their various roles as a result of gender-typed expectations.

Diversity research has failed to address diversity among women and has focused instead on the dominant middle class population of women (Reid & Comas-Diaz, 1990). The double influence of gender and ethnic discrimination has influenced one's personal development, yet their combined effects have not been studied sufficiently (Essed, 1991; Reid & Comas-Diaz, 1990). The past 50 years have generated much information about workers, some of which related to women. For instance, Reskin and Padavic (1994) found that gendering occurs as a result of socialization, actions of social institutions, and interpersonal interaction. They identified a "system of social relations" in the way the workplace is organized, a system that contributed to the male advantage. The sexual

division of labor is a feature of work that assigns men and women to different work on the basis of the worker's gender. Yet, which gender is assigned what tasks varies from culture to culture (Reskin & Padavic, 1994). They maintained that women dominate almost the same occupations in 1990 as they did in 1940 and that the devaluation of their work is linked to a gender system that values male over female work. The more women found in a job field, the less they earn as compared to men in male-dominated job fields.

Focus Questions and Methodology

D'Andrea (1994) indicated that studies in this area have relied upon non-culturally normed instruments that are not appropriate for research with Native Americans. Therefore, qualitative methods were needed to overcome such norming barriers. By providing personal narratives in the emic or the informant's perspective (Pike, 1966), this study provided information through the Native American woman's voice. This kind of understanding uncovered the underlying perceptions and beliefs that influenced expectations for work approaches and interactions. Using narratives to give voice to Native American women enables them to tell their stories in their own words, thereby facilitating their "rediscovery of womanhood" (Greenman, 1996, p. 24).

These issues called for research on the Creek feminine perspective of work through qualitative means. In responding to the call, the following questions guided the research:

1. How do Muscogee (Creek) women define work?
2. What are the influences on their work choices?
3. What motivates them to do the work that they have chosen to do?
4. How do they perceive the dual effects of gender and ethnicity on their success as workers and on career choices?

It is important to note that these questions did not constitute testable hypotheses, but rather they provide a focal point that guided the collection and analysis of data.

The lead author went into this study knowing that there were many cultural differences in the Native American tribes of the U.S., yet the degree to which the available information about Indians described the circumstances of the Muscogee (Creek) people was unknown. For Native Americans as an ethnic group, the literature and census records indicated poverty level existence, high unemployment, high incidences of alcohol abuse (and related illnesses), diabetes, and tuberculosis, and low levels of educational attainment. Determining to what degree such conditions were present in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation was of primary interest to her.

As a "thin blood," she had wondered how these people would receive her. Knowing their hesitation to open up to researchers, she was unsure whether she would be accepted as Creek or would be viewed as non-Indian. Her previous experience with Indians had shown her that their communication styles differed from that of the mainstream society to some extent (that is, they do not rely on constant eye contact when talking), as did their social interaction styles (that is, there are many gendered role designations that, in some instances, preclude male-female interaction).

Multiple personal guided interviews (Spradley, 1979) were conducted with a purposeful sample of 16 Muscogee (Creek) women from rural east central Oklahoma. Three months of fieldwork that occurred in the form of four visits over a period of one year were required to collect the data. All of the informants were at least 33 years of age to correspond to an age range feasible for assuming their having experienced life sufficient for them to know the range of activities available to women of their culture. Ages ranged from 35 to 84. Educational levels ranged from eighth grade education at an Indian boarding school to a master's degree from a public university. Only two of the informants were not high school graduates. All of the informants were raised in the area where the data were collected.

To ensure the accuracy of the findings, several methods were used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation of methods (ethnographic interviewing, document analysis, and participant/unobtrusive observation) provided a means for verifying information received by one method through use of other methods. For example, what participants revealed in interviews was substantiated through observation. Further, member checks were used to ensure that understanding was correct. Each participant was sent a verbatim copy of her interviews for review and correction. Peer debriefing with Indians and non-Indians was also used to ensure correct understanding of the data. Using these techniques, the accuracy of the findings was assured.

Unobtrusive and participant observations (Merriam, 1988; Bernard, 1994; Spradley, 1979) took place in a variety of situations that included, for example, traditional ceremonies and dances, church services, community centers, council meetings, tribal offices, a job fair, Creek homes, and powwows. Document analysis included the

review of tribal documents, local and tribal newspapers, and material from the tribal cultural preservation office library and the Creek Council House Museum library.

While in the field, the lead author took the first three interview transcriptions and coded them, using the causal comparative method of analysis. Using 3x5 index cards, she developed an initial scheme of coding. As subsequent interviews were recorded and transcribed, she continued to code and recode them, reworking the coding scheme as needed. The resulting coding scheme included three categories with 32 subcategories. One category, Views on Work, included, for example, definitions of work, kinds of work done, views on education/skill acquisition, how work was chosen and how they felt about work. The category, Being a Creek Woman, included what it means, traditional and modern stances, how learned, feelings about Creek/non-Creeks, role designations, and Creek vs, female identity; and the category, Creek Culture, included family relationships, tribal beliefs and values, humor, cultural learning, and feelings about the past. The coded interviews and other coded data sources, including observations, field notes and logs, were input into QSR NUD-IST software, making the massive amount of coded data more manageable. To ensure that her own assumptions and perspectives were not clouding her insight into the data analysis, data were separately coded by another researcher, and the resulting coding scheme was compared to her own.

Results, Conclusions, and Limitations

In studying the unique heritage of Creek Indian women, this research shed light on how cultural referents can lead to differences in workplace behavior and expectations, while contributing to our understanding of little known American female minorities. The development of identity for Creek women was influenced by the extended family, by their shared heritage, traditions, culture, and language, by others' perceptions of them, by a sense of belonging, and by their pride in being Creek women. Their ethnic attachment was to Native Americans, rather than to other ethnic minorities or Whites. Like other Native American women, they felt a sense of duality from working in the mainstream and in returning to their homes where a different set of customs prevailed. They felt the most attachment to the extended family, the clan, their tribal town, to Creek people, then to Native Americans, and lastly to the mainstream American culture. Likewise, the data showed that Muscogee (Creek) women felt a stronger bond to the cultural heritage of their birth than to the occupational or organizational culture associated with the nature or habitat of their work. This finding did not vary as women became more educated or had more work exposure to the mainstream American culture.

The Muscogee (Creek) women followed career paths that began with work using the skills they learned growing up. These skills were either used to secure work in the public sector or in paying home jobs. At a later time, typically when survival needs were met, the women included community and/or volunteer work in their lives. This work helped them to meet responsibility they felt to help others and to preserve the Muscogee (Creek) culture. Through their lives the home work continued, strengthening the bond with familial others. At or near retirement, the work focused on home work and community/volunteer work. The model for ideal work for the women was one that incorporated their values, that enabled them to preserve the Muscogee (Creek) culture, that facilitated their involvement in family activities, and that enabled them to be of help to others of their cultural community. Whether Creek women chose to work for pay in the home, i.e. as a babysitter or housekeeper, or in public, that is, outside the home, i.e. as a teacher, nurse's aide, or waitress, they were concerned for others in their cultural community and wished to perform their work in a way that would support their heritage. This characteristic was an extension of their familial, communal nature.

Many theories of career development fail to consider that minorities, in general (Cohn, 1997), and Native Americans, in particular (Bataille & Sands, 1984), experience external constraints that hinder their career planning efforts. Scholars noted that minorities are typically more concerned with survival needs and concerns about cultural preservation. Therefore, the idea that work is a reflection of self-concept and personal fulfillment is not the perception that minorities in the U.S. have about work.

Data from this study substantiated research on the value systems of Native Americans as being different from those of mainstream America (Red Horse, 1980; Edwards & Edwards, 1980; Olson & Wilson, 1984) in terms of communication styles, spirituality, role designations, perceptions of time, and views toward collectivism and individualism. An overriding aspect of the Indian value system is its emphasis on harmony with nature, the tribe, and within the individual. A strong attachment to their sense of homeland was an essential ingredient that caused Muscogee (Creek) women to feel strong connections to their family homes, their hometown area, and to lands presently and previously held by their people. Thus, it is not surprising that the informants in this study saw their role in preserving the culture as more important than personal professional goals. This finding is consistent with the

literature on collectivism (Triandis, 1995). Finally, data from this study also found the Muscogee (Creek) culture more in line with the more nurturing attributes of feminist cultures as defined by Hofstede (1991). These values place importance on helping others, preserving the environment, higher government expenditure on welfare issues, complementary roles for each gender, and conflict resolution by negotiation and compromise. Both Hofstede and Triandis have characterized the mainstream American culture as possessing contrasting values of individualism and masculinity. Finally, data from this study illustrated change in role expectation and values identified in previous reviews of literature on Native Americans (Sattler, 1995). For example, little evidence of arranged marriages among Muscogee (Creek) women was found. Moreover, the informants indicated that women in their culture increasingly played leadership roles in their tribes and outside their tribal communities.

An ironic finding from this study that substantiated Medicine's (1988) work is that, as Muscogee (Creek) women attempted to provide service to their community by becoming better educated, they limited their opportunities to marry within the tribe. Upon returning home from, in particular, university instruction, they were viewed with wariness and perceived as less Indian after having spent time in the mainstream culture. This cultural conflict may discourage Muscogee (Creek) women from pursuing higher education. In addition, there was a general assumption that a woman's place was in the home, taking care of the family and teaching the customs of the Creek people. As a result, when women did work outside the home, there was guilt on their part and tension in family relationships, when the men in their families had different ideas about their roles. This finding was especially true in more traditional homes, where there had been little exposure to the mainstream culture. Likewise, the more traditional a woman, the less comfortable she felt working with non-Native Americans.

This study was limited to the perceptions of women. Future studies might include the perceptions of Muscogee (Creek) men about women's work or about their own ideas of work. Comparison studies with other tribes could shed light on the generalizability of a set of pan-Native American beliefs about work. Researchers might also assess the differences in the degree of identity salience for traditional and modern Creek women toward the tribe versus the degree of identity for the occupational subculture in which they work. Further, do women in certain subcultures feel more identity with their tribal traditions than do women in other occupational subcultures? For example, do Native American women, in general, and Muscogee (Creek) women, in particular, who are teachers identify themselves with the subculture of teachers more than similar women who are nurses?

How This Research Contributes to the Practice of HRD

We know little of the forces that influence workforce diversity (Choudhury, 1996; Creech, 1995). Far too often managers and human resource professionals rely on vague constructs, such as empowerment, or on programs, such as affirmative action (Dooley & Rice, 1995). Seldom do we delve into study of the different realities about the work held by women and men and by different minority and ethnic groups. This issue has become increasingly problematic as the composition of America's workforce has changed. The findings emphasized the importance of the Muscogee (Creek) culture to the development of the women's values, beliefs, and attitudes about work. The strength of the influence of tribal culture on their work attitudes and choices has implications for HRD in terms of addressing the leadership, communication and training needs of Muscogee (Creek) women. The following points offer a few examples of how the findings from this study might influence how HRD professionals work with and prepare others to work with Native Americans.

Data from this study corroborated reported views that Native American women have about leadership differing from that of the mainstream American culture (Fernandez, 1981; Meyer, 1971). These findings indicated a preference for a consultative and participatory approach to management, as well as a need to discuss issues as a forum. This tendency reflects those approaches that council members take in tribal meetings. Moreover, women in decision-making positions did not see themselves as leaders in an authoritative sense, but rather they saw themselves as service providers. Thus, the emphasis was how they, as managers, could facilitate the work of others. These findings are consistent with the literature on collectives as well as feminist societies, supporting the emphasis earlier reported in this study on providing service to others. HRD practitioners can use these findings in developing training designed to help managers customize their approaches to working with Native American employees and managers.

Career counseling and strategies need to recall the importance of cultural preservation as a motivator in career decisions. Career paths that permit Native Americans, in general, and Muscogee (Creek) people, in particular, to care for and protect their tribe may be more attractive. Likewise, career counselors should recall that bonds to one's cultural identity would take precedence over professional or organizational identities. In turn,

managers and HRD counselors should also be cognizant of the sense of duality and the resulting tension that Native Americans may feel when working in the mainstream American culture.

HRD professionals should also be aware of a difference in communication styles when working with Native Americans, in general, and Muscogee (Creek) women, in particular. As in all collectives, Native Americans place value on social relationships in establishing the trust needed for cooperation and open communication. A sense of group solidarity drives whom Indians are more likely to feel comfortable confiding in and whose counsel they are most willing to accept. The Muscogee (Creeks) were also found to be an oral culture who express themselves through stories. This form of communication is especially powerful because of the lessons that it conveys. The informants in this study frequently answered a question with a story. HRD professionals and other management personnel might employ storytelling techniques as described by Hansen and Kahnweiler (1993) to convey important organizational points and to learn more about the perspectives of this population.

Finally, Earley (1994) emphasized the need for trainers to consider the individualism/ collectivism dimension when preparing curricula and activities for classroom training. According to Earley's findings, collectivists had better performance from group-focused training, while individualists experienced greater impact from self-focused training. Because Muscogee (Creeks) are collectivists, it follows that they would respond to participatory small group training opportunities.

Summary

This study used ethnographic techniques to explore how Muscogee (Creek) women perceive the work they do. As members of a collective, matrilineal culture, there was a strong emphasis on the preservation of their cultural heritage and on a desire to serve their tribe. These differences affected the informants' work and career development motivations. Likewise, their expectations for management, communication, and training styles were influenced as a result of their cultural norms. As HRD specialists and researchers, we should be concerned about the developmental needs of ethnic minorities and adapt.

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Subordinates' Information Seeking Behavior: Empirical Investigation of the Effect of Perceived Leadership Style and Individual Differences

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This paper is aimed at offering additional insights into subordinate-superior interaction in an organizational setting. Transformational and transactional theories were utilized to postulate that the content and frequency of information sought by a subordinate from his/her superior will vary depending on that superior's leadership style. This relationship was tested with individual difference predictors in mind. Empirical results, based on the field study using survey data and longitudinal checklist recording, show general support for the model. Implications are drawn for the role of information seeking for both managers' and subordinates' development and career advancement.

Keywords: Information Seeking; Leadership Style; Subordinate-Superior Interaction

In this paper I focus on subordinates' information seeking behavior and test suggested expansion of available models used to determine the sources of influence (Madzar, 1998). The hypotheses tested herein are based on the assumptions that: an important part of managers' task is to act as a source of information to their subordinates; and that managers are often characterized as employees' major link to the information environment. In this light, I explore the seeking process in terms of frequency and types of information sought by subordinates. The focus is on the influence of a superior's leadership style on subordinates' seeking behavior, in the midst of powerful evidence pointing to a strong relationship between leadership style and subordinates' satisfaction and performance. Lack of field research that deals with source attributes in general, and with superior attributes in particular, seems paradoxical. Exploratory in character, this study examined the intricate nature of the influence of such attributes, by using transformational and transactional leadership style frameworks (Bass, 1985). For full theoretical development of arguments that led to the set of hypotheses stated below, please refer to this author's paper presented at the 1998 AHRD conference in Chicago.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership: Effect on Subordinates Information Seeking Patterns

First, we can expect a more involved information seeking activity on the part of a subordinate from a transformational leader as this style will lower inference, face loss, and effort costs (Ashford & Cummings, 1983) by mentoring, one-on-one contact and intellectual stimulation.

H1: Perception of a superior's leadership style will add to the prediction of the frequency of information sought by a subordinate in that frequency will be higher if a superior is perceived as a transformational, rather than transactional leader.

Second, high probability of negative reinforcement or punishment in seeking performance feedback from a transactional leader will negatively influence the amount of feedback sought. Conversely, the style seems to encourage seeking technical and referent information, as they are distanced from self. Technical information is typically task-related and does not involve feelings or judgements. Seeking referent information can be regarded as a preparation for, or a confirmation of this exchange-based relationship.

H2: The frequency of seeking technical and referent information from a transactional leader will be higher than the frequency of seeking performance and social feedback from such a leader.

Next, intellectual stimulation and the insistence on the continuous development exercised by a transformational leader enhance a subordinate's interest in the process of work, not only its outputs. This interest, combined with enhancement of employee trust (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990) contributes to the amount of process performance feedback sought.

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H3: Frequency of seeking process performance feedback, as compared to outcome performance feedback, will be higher if subordinates seek the feedback from transformational than from transactional leaders.

Exploring the Effect of Individual Difference Antecedents on the Focal Relationship

Also included in this study's model are those individual difference constructs for which there is considerable evidence of influence on feedback/information seeking. Following on the advice of Ajzen (1988) in regard to the conceptualization of individual difference constructs, I advocate the use of their more domain-specific levels that pertain uniquely to organizational settings.

Closely examined in the OB literature, job-related tolerance for ambiguity--JRTA (Benett, Herold, & Ashford, 1985: Norton, 1975) has been found to be negatively related with feedback seeking frequency (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992). In the case of transactional leadership style, a subordinate-leader interaction is reduced to a minimum, and as such it provides for higher levels of the ambiguity of the situation and uncertainty about outcomes among subordinates who consequently lack referent and outcome performance feedback/information.

H4: The higher the subordinates' JRTA, the more referent information and outcome performance feedback they will seek from a transactional leader, as compared to other information types.

Recent feedback-related research on work domain--individual goal orientation has been grounded in social cognitive psychology (Dweck, 1986). VandeWalle and Cummings (1997)built on the distinction between two types of individuals and their behaviors--those with learning goals who focus on improving their ability, and those with performance goals who focus on proving their ability, all according to their implicit theories of intelligence. Because learning oriented individuals seek more feedback about their work, even under challenging conditions (VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997), it seems plausible that:

H5: Learning oriented subordinates will seek more process performance feedback in general than will their performance oriented peers, from both transformational and transactional leaders.

It has been suggested that subordinates high in self-esteem, are less influenced by the quality of their relationship with their feedback source in deciding whether or not to seek feedback (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995). On the other hand, subordinates with low self-esteem, needing approval and self-affirmation, as well as in search of self-diagnosticity, may take advantage of the developmental support they receive from transformational leaders, and become further intimidated and alienated by the possible negative reinforcement practices of transactional leaders. In general, it is expected that organization-based self-esteem--OBSE (Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989), will influence the relationship between subordinates' information seeking and a perceived leadership style such that:

H6: The level of subordinates' OBSE will be inversely related to the amount of information they seek from transformational, and positively related to the amount of information they seek from transactional leaders.

More generally, and according to the behavioral plasticity theory (Brockner, 1988), subordinates with low OBSE are likely to seek information that appears less costly and does not have the potential to further deteriorate their sense of self-identity. They will thus be reluctant, in general, to seek information about self.

H7: The lower the subordinates' OBSE, the more technical and referent information they will seek, as compared to performance and social feedback, from both transactional and transformational leaders .

Methods

Sample

The participants in the study were employees of a large Midwest-based therapeutic medical technology company, a leader in a highly competitive global environment. The study data were collected from a homogenous sample of 75 predominantly white male electrical and software engineers (82.7% were male, and 96% were white),

who all work in the same division, performing essentially same tasks. All respondents have worked in the Division over six months. All participants had reported to the person they assessed as their immediate supervisor for at least three months prior to this study.

As described, the sample is a reflection of the following research question-driven requirements. First, to avoid data contamination, all participating employees belong to the same organization, and perform very similar tasks. This isolates the influence of a differing organizational/divisional culture that affects communication norms or customs, on the relationships of interest. Some organizational cultures tend to 'institutionalize' certain communication patterns which may affect the display of the information seeking behavior, and the variance among them would have to be accounted for in a cross-sectional design. Ashford & Northcraft's (1992) finding that publicness of the feedback seeking context is negatively associated with feedback seeking frequency is an example of this concern. Also important is the need to minimize the variance of the influence of the nature of the task itself on the information seeking behavior, both in regard to type and frequency. Finally, on a more general level, a single site design reduces a problem of morphogenesis, often encountered in longitudinal organizational research. Various components of most organizations are always changing at various rates and for a variety of external or internal reasons. With a single-site design, we assume that behaviors and attitudes of all participants are affected by the same set of changes. Specifically in regard to information seeking, such changes may be associated with contextual uncertainty and role ambiguity (Ashford & Cummings, 1985).

Second, newcomers to the organization were excluded from the study because the socialization literature has pointed to the differences in the information seeking patterns between newcomers and already socialized employees (Morrison, 1993; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). The literature is not clear on determining the length of the socialization period which ranges from one month to one year (Fisher, 1986). Upon reviewing the task and training requirements of this sample, a six month guideline was implemented. Third, as the respondents assessed their superior's characteristics and behaviors on a leadership instrument, I assumed they needed to have spent at least three months as that superior's subordinate in order to be able to credibly assesses their perceptions. Fourth, the choice of the organization itself also concurs with the theoretical assumptions about the emergence of transformational leadership in crisis. Acknowledgment of a highly competitive global market, and the sensitive nature of medical products, create pressures on these employees, in their day-to-day operation (George, 1995).

Procedure

The research was designed to utilize field setting and survey methodology, to maximize the exploitation of a natural environment, as well as real-time, semi-longitudinal data collection. The data were collected in two phases.

Phase 1: Survey. The subordinate questionnaire includes the items related to the independent variables in the study: perceived leadership style, OBSE, JRTA, work-domain goal orientation, as well as demographic information. Leadership style was assessed with the Bass and Avolio (1991) 5X- rater version, of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) which contains 68 items on a 5-point scale. An approximate cut-off point of 2.5 was used to determine the style - transformational, transactional, both, or none- which is in accordance with other studies using this instrument. As can be seen from the hypotheses, this study is interested in the transformational/ transactional leadership dichotomy. OBSE was assessed with the 10-item Pierce *et al.* (1989) instrument on a 5-point scale. JRTA was assessed with a 3-item subscale from Norton's (1975) larger questionnaire, with responses on a 6-point scale. Goal orientation was assessed with the 13-item VandeWalle (1995) instrument, with responses on a 6-point scale. The means across items of the learning and performance scales were taken to represent learning and performance oriented individuals. In the final analyses individuals were considered to be learning oriented/ performance oriented through the dichotomy created by implementing the 3.5 scale score as the divider between the two goal orientations.

The transformational leadership scale had a mean of 2.91 (SD = .32), and the transactional leadership scale 2.70 (SD = .27). High alphas were reported for all leadership dimensions (from .81 for contingent reward to .93 for idealized influence and inspiration). The JRTA scale had a mean of 2.97 (SD = .89) and an alpha of .77, while OBSE scale had a mean of 3.43 (SD = .90) and an alpha of .95. Finally, the performance goal orientation scale had a mean of 2.69 (SD = .67) and the learning scale had a mean of 1.75 (SD = .60). The alpha levels were .87 and .93, respectively. Scores on the four scales were either uncorrelated or showed low correlation ($r = .23$; $p < .05$ between goal orientation and leadership style; and $r = .22$, $p < .05$ between OBSE and goal orientation).

Phase 2: Recording of information seeking patterns. Employees recorded daily in a behavior checklist the type and frequency of information they sought from their immediate superior. This phase was four weeks in duration, to allow for an information seeking pattern to emerge (20 days total). The respondents also recorded an unusual circumstance (when a subordinate or superior is sick, on holiday, etc.) which prevented them from seeking

information from their superior on a particular day. The one-way ANOVA, followed by the Tukey method of multiple comparison showed no significant differences in means between the number of 'unusual' days and any of the individual information types sought.

Scores on the dimensions of the main dependent variable, i.e., the types of information seeking, were correlated from $r = .43$; $p < .0001$ between social feedback and referent information seeking to $r = .67$; $p < .0001$ between process performance feedback and social feedback seeking. In regard to the distinctness of the five information types, the correlations compare to Morrison's (1993) which ranged between .24 and .75.

This design avoids the differential period problem (Kimberley, 1984) by having the respondents record their information seeking from their superior on a daily basis close to real time, and after they have responded to the items designed to measure their attitudes and perceptions. Also, the use of a true continuous scale for recording the frequency of information seeking episodes, partially accounted for an inherent potential problem with self-reports, which is that respondents may not be entirely accurate in reporting their past behavior.

Analyses

To test hypothesis 1, I used stepwise multiple regression analysis as the research goal is primarily predictive; the number of independent variables is relatively small; and independent variables are not substantially correlated with each other (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Analyses for other hypotheses were more descriptive and correlational in nature, and thus required a range of simpler tests such as: a simple paired t-test; a one-way ANOVA, in some cases followed by the Tukey's method of multiple comparison; and correlation.

Results

Hypothesis Testing

As discussed, stepwise multiple regression was used to test Hypothesis 1 for the extent of information seeking dependent variable, as well as all individual information types sought among the subordinate sample. Along with testing for predictive strength of the perceived leadership style, the main effect of individual difference predictors--OBSE, JRTA, and goal orientation--were included in a series of seven regression equations. The equations include each of the five information types sought, a performance feedback composite, as well as the extent of information seeking composite as dependent variables. As seen in Table 1, the hypothesis was supported for all equations. Leadership style entered in Step 1 in all but one equation, with R^2s ranging between .10 for referent information to .21 for outcome performance feedback seeking, and beta weights from .33 to .47. Leadership style's total explained variance for the aggregated extent of subordinates' information seeking was $R^2 = .25$, with beta weight .50.

The contribution of individual difference independent variables was considerably lower. OBSE did not appear as a significant predictor in social feedback and technical information seeking equations, and its overall contribution was $R^2 = .04$, with beta weight -.19. JRTA's R^2s varied between .05 for technical information and outcome performance feedback seeking and .07 for process performance feedback, with beta weights from -.22 to -.23. JRTA did not appear as a significant predictor of social feedback and referent information seeking, and its overall contribution was $R^2 = .10$, with beta weight -.31. Finally, goal orientation only appeared as a significant predictor in process performance feedback seeking ($R^2 = .20$ and beta weight.39), and in social feedback seeking ($R^2 = .06$ and beta weight .25) equations. It did not enter in the overall equation.

A paired sample t-test was performed to test Hypotheses 2 and 3. Hypothesis 2 suggests that subordinates would seek more technical and referent information than performance and social feedback from a transactional leader. The difference in means was significant (with the 2-tail probability of .0001) for the technical-social and referent-social information/feedback seeking pairs. The findings thus provide only partial support for the hypothesis because the difference in means between technical and performance information/feedback sought appears nonsignificant, and also nonsignificant and negative between referent and performance information/feedback sought. Hypothesis 3, on the other hand, suggesting that subordinates would seek more process than outcome performance feedback from transformational than from transactional leaders, was supported. The difference in means for each leadership group was significant for the outcome-process feedback seeking pair, but the t-value is larger for the transformational leadership group (-3.58 versus -2.08).

Hypothesis 4 again tested for transactional leader group only, in regard to the suggestion that subordinates would seek more referent information and outcome performance feedback compared to other information types. One-way ANOVA was performed and followed by the Tukey's method of multiple comparison. The mean response

for JRTA was compared with mean responses on the extent of seeking each of the five information types. The hypothesis was not supported.

Table 1
Stepwise Multiple Regression Results

Info type sought	Step	Beta	R2	F
Extent Aggregate Info Seeking	1:Lstyle	.50	.25	24.49**
	2:JRTA	-.31	.35	19.55**
	3:OBSE	-.19	.39	15.07**
Outcome Performance FS	1:Lstyle	.47	.21	19.10**
	2:OBSE	-.27	.30	15.71**
	3:JRTA	-.22	.35	12.87**
Process Performance FS	1:GO	.39	.20	18.39**
	2:Lstyle	.33	.30	15.38**
	3:JRTA	-.23	.37	14.11**
	4:OBSE	-.21	.42	12.48**
Performance Aggregate FS	1:Lstyle	.48	.22	20.64**
	2:JRTA	-.28	.32	17.09**
	3:OBSE	-.21	.36	13.61**
Social FS	1:Lstyle	.33	.15	13.14**
	2:GO	.25	.21	9.78**
Referent Information S	1:Lstyle	.35	.10	8.15*
	2:OBSE	-.26	.17	7.15*
Technical Information S	1:Lstyle	.40	.17	15.09**
	2:JRTA	-.23	.22	10.43**

** p<.001; * p<.005; N = 75
FS = feedback seeking; S = seeking; Lstyle = leadership style; GO = goal orientation; JRTA = job-related tolerance for ambiguity; OBSE = organization-based self-esteem

Hypothesis 5, suggesting that learning oriented individuals will seek more process performance feedback than will their performance oriented peers from both transformational and transactional leaders, was supported. Results of one-way ANOVA indicate significant F values for both the transactional ($F = 7.01$; $p < .05$) and transformational leadership group ($F = 7.29$; $p<.01$).

Hypothesis 6 suggested an inverse relationship between OBSE and transformational and a positive relationship between OBSE and transactional leadership style. Correlation coefficients indicate only partial support for the hypothesis. OBSE was negatively correlated with the extent of information seeking among subordinates who perceived their leader as transformational (® = -.33; $p < .05$), but the positive correlation for transactional leadership style was nonsignificant.

One-way ANOVA, followed by the Tukey method of multiple comparison was performed to test Hypothesis 7. The prediction that the lower the subordinates' OBSE, the more technical and referent information as opposed to performance and social feedback they will seek from both leader groups, was unsupported. No significant difference was found on any of the above information types for either of the groups.

Discussion

In a series of stepwise regression analyses leadership style emerged as a significant predictor of all information seeking types, and was entered in step 1 in all but one equation. Dependent variables best explained by the model were process and outcome performance feedback seeking. This is not surprising knowing that the conceptual origins of all three individual difference variables in the model were tested mainly in the area of performance feedback seeking research. By comparing the process and outcome performance feedback seeking equations, the value of this Earley, Northcraft, Lee & Lituchy (1990) distinction becomes apparent. The equations differ greatly in regard to the leadership style (R^2 of 0.21 for the outcome versus R^2 of 0.10 for the process feedback seeking), and, to an extent, in regard to the OBSE and JRTA levels of explained variance. Goal orientation, which emerges as the most significant predictor of process feedback seeking, does not even enter in the outcome feedback seeking equation. The danger of collapsing these two performance feedback seeking types into one is shown in the equation with the performance feedback seeking composite. In it, the goal orientation effect is not even entered, thus creating a misleading picture of the overall performance feedback seeking predictors.

The model explained less variance of the other types of information seeking. This, again, is not surprising because the literature on the antecedents of seeking technical, referent information and social feedback from a superior is sparse at best.

The lack of stronger prediction by JRTA and OBSE can, to an extent, be attributed to a small statistical power of the sample size. JRTA did not contribute to the prediction of either social feedback or referent information seeking. This can be explained by the perception many employees hold that social feedback is not directly job-related, and its seeking can therefore be postponed, even if a situation is ambiguous. The same argument may explain lack of contribution of OBSE. Concerning referent information, it is often provided to an employee up-front. (i.e., prior to task execution), and, as such, it does not account for process differences of the two leadership styles. Finally, the lack of OBSE predictive power for technical information seeking can be attributed to the fact that technical information seems to be most distanced from self as it explicitly refers to task-related matters, and as such is unlikely to implicate major consequences for one's self-esteem in the seeking process.

Only partial support was obtained for hypothesis 2. The results attested only to the significant difference in regard to social but not performance feedback, while the prediction was that the subordinates would seek more technical and referent information than both feedback types, from a transactional leader. It is plausible to suppose that obtaining performance feedback was a requirement too important for task continuation or completion, regardless of the costs or consequences involved in seeking it.

Lack of support for the direct relationship between the level of JRTA and frequency of seeking referent information and outcome performance feedback from transactional leaders can be partially explained by a small sample size (N=28). Also, the generally low average JRTA among subordinates might not have produced sufficient variance for multiple comparison analysis. Finally, the lack of support may also be explained by the possibility that the difference in importance of each information type may not be attributed to situational ambiguity, but to the tendency of transactional leaders to provide clarity. They simply know how to tell people what is expected and there may be no need for asking.

Strong support was provided for an argument that learning oriented subordinates would seek more process performance feedback when compared to their performance oriented peers, from both leader types. This finding is consistent with the results obtained for the process performance feedback seeking equation.

The findings concerning the influence of OBSE on the relationship between the leadership style and information seeking behavior suggest that subordinates with lower OBSE will take advantage of the developmental support they receive from a transformational leader, while subordinates with higher OBSE may be less influenced by the quality of their relationship with the leader and will not seek to take the same advantage. A suggestion that the relationship between the level of OBSE and the frequency of information seeking from transactional leader was not supported. Before any conclusions are drawn, one is reminded of the fact that the mean for OBSE across the subordinate sample was generally high. This may have reduced variance even further in an already small sample. Also unsupported was the proposition that the lower the subordinates' OBSE, the more technical and referent information they will seek as opposed to performance and social feedback, from both leader groups. While, again, we can speculate that this suggestion refers only to individuals with very low level of OBSE (Brockner, 1988), and that there were very few such individuals within our sample, larger issues related to the complexity of this construct remain.

In summary of the findings related to the individual difference main effect relationships, we conclude that work-domain goal orientation was the strongest of the three predictors. The findings on JRTA and OBSE need to be

tested on larger and more varied samples. These relations may also need more theoretical refinement before their true influence on the leadership style - subordinate information seeking behavior relationship is established.

Practical Implications

This study conveys important lessons to HRD practitioners. First of all, the results should broaden a practitioner's view of transformational/transactional leader categorization to include the role of an information source, and not just that of an information provider. To enrich the picture of an information seeking component it is necessary to develop and implement training efforts based on the pivotal assumption that subordinates are proactive in their search for adequate feedback/information.

If the results obtained in this study indeed hold after replications in a variety of other organizational settings, with different tasks at hand, then management training efforts should focus on the following objectives: 1)preliminary assessment of the existing leadership style (a shorter, 1996 version of the MLQ instrument is useful); 2) assessment of managers' perceived subordinate information seeking patterns related to the task and broader organization; 3) learning about subordinates' individual characteristics that play an important role in how they choose to seek/not seek information; and 4) understanding of differences in information seeking patterns depending on information type. Even if the training program is not directed at changing managers' leadership style, it should clearly establish the importance of their role as a source of a variety of information types for their subordinates.

OD interventions should first focus on a larger picture of information sources utilized by subordinates, within a broader organizational information environment. In today's complex design, typically encompassing flexible work schedules, virtual office practices, and part time work, this may prove a difficult task. However, only through systematic investigation of the information that employees need, and the assessment of the strategies they have used to get each information type in the past, can we truly assess the specific role of leadership style in this search process. We may well find that leadership training may not be the next logical step, but that structural interventions may yield better results in regard to leader accessibility in general.

Limitations and Future Research

For the reasons outlined above, this study focused on one organization, and a homogenous sample of employees, performing a highly similar task. The study should therefore be considered within such a context. The next logical step should assess the external validity of obtained results by replication of the study in other organizational settings, with other tasks at hand. Only after such extension of this research, can we place confidence in more general statements about the antecedents of information seeking behavior examined herein.

This study only investigated direct inquiry methods of information seeking, when a variety of other modes such as monitoring (Ashford & Cummings, 1983) have been rightly noticed. It has been found that inquiry, as compared to monitoring, is a more costly strategy as it exposes the individual's need for feedback. This need may be interpreted as a sign of uncertainty or insecurity (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992). Therefore, the decision to limit the measurement to inquiry may pose a limitation to realistically assessing feedback seeking patterns.

Naturally, most employees are likely to also seek information from sources other than their superiors. These other sources such as co-workers; task itself; and the organization, may vary in importance to employees in regard to different types of information. The findings on the importance of a supervisor as a feedback source may not hold equally for technical and referent information. Thus, any bias produced by the choice of a specific source is likely to be unequally distributed among the information types included in the study. It should be acknowledged, however, that this study's design was not conducive to collecting such information from subordinates as it would have made a recall activity at the end of the day a more uncertain and difficult process. Also not included in this study was assessment of the quality of acquired information. O'Reilly's (1982) attributes such as: timeliness, relevance, and specificity may be of future interest.

In conclusion, the results of the study suggest that, within the boundaries of the specific organizational setting described, superior's leadership style indeed has a unique effect on each of the five information types sought by subordinates. Exploratory in character, the study provides guidance for further efforts in investigating this salient antecedent.

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An Empirical Study of Age Discrimination in Teacher Selection With Application to HRD

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Research has suggested that age discrimination occurs in teacher selection, due primarily to decision-makers' behaviors. A study was conducted using matched ages for hypothetical elementary teacher applicants and elementary principals to determine whether principals' evaluations of applicants were influenced by principal and applicant ages. Results indicated the possibility of discrimination. The importance of principals' competencies in selection and implications of using the Analysis of Performance Improvement Model to improve their competencies in selection procedures are discussed.

Keywords: Selection, Age Discrimination, Analysis of Performance Improvement

Public education has always been a great interest to society and the business community. Particularly, the quality of elementary teachers is one of the most important issues in education because it can dictate the quality of the future workforce (Flesch, 1966; Los Angeles Times, 1992). To improve the quality of education, public elementary schools have undergone numerous changes, including not only educational methods, but also selection of qualified teachers. The recent strong interest in accountability of public education is related to competency and competency specifications of teachers. Harris and Monk (1992) state that if school personnel focus on the use of competence in teaching and competencies applied to teacher selection, schools can improve the quality of education. Selection is a decision-making process to match the capabilities of an individual with position requirements (Harris & Monk, 1992). This process involves gathering information about candidates (teachers), identifying qualified candidates for positions, and selecting those candidates who have the required levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) in teaching as well as the motivation and potential for performance improvement (Castetter & Young, 2000). In this respect, teachers are selected for their professional credentials, which meet position requirements (Young & Ryerson, 1986).

Within a school organization, teacher selection has been seen mostly as an administrative process, in which school principals are responsible for the entire selection process and decisions in hiring teachers. In other words, the quality of school principals is a critical factor in identifying and selecting highly qualified teacher applicants. This ability among principals lays in their competencies, knowledge, and skills in selection (Castetter & Young, 2000). Harris and Monk (1992) define competence as "demonstrated capability to perform" and competencies as "a description of behaviors and behavioral outcomes." In this regard, quality of competencies enables principals to select highly qualified teacher applicants. In addition, the selection system, including the process, criteria, legal requirements, and methods, also serves a critical function in selection, which contributes to developing the needed quality of school personnel (Castetter & Young, 2000). In summary, selecting qualified teachers is a function of competencies and KSAs of school principals and the selection system, which, when combined, ensure quality education in schools.

Problem Statement

In teacher selection, school principals are responsible for making decisions during the entire selection process. Consequently, the ability to select the best candidate from a group of applicants requires school principals to have high competencies in selection. Therefore, competencies and KSAs of school principals influence the quality of personnel in schools. However, Harris and Monk (1992) point out that principals often make decisions that are based on a combination of intuition, hunches, and behaviors, relative to success in teaching positions, rather than using scientific, legal, and job-related criteria.

Any selection system aims at ensuring the selection of the best applicant based on his or her KSAs and qualifications relative to position requirements, while meeting legal requirements which prohibit any type of

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discrimination. However, studies have shown discriminatory selection decisions (Singer, 1986; Waldman & Avolio, 1986), particularly age discrimination (chronological age) taking place among school organizations, during the selection process, specifically during the screening phase. That is, older teacher applicants, who have KSAs and considerable experience, tend to have difficulty in getting positions, regardless of their teaching performance and qualifications (Young & Allison, 1984; Young & McMurry, 1986). If competencies and KSAs of school principals contribute to selecting highly qualified teachers, and if selection decisions principals make are not based on applicants' professional credentials, it is important to examine whether a selection decision might be interfered with by age discrimination and what might cause these behaviors by school principals during the selection process.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are to investigate (1) whether older elementary school teacher applicants are discriminated against during the screening phase of the selection process, (2) whether ages of principals evaluating teacher applicant materials during the screening process are influenced by applicant age information, and (3) to provide possible HRD solutions to improve the performance of the principals in the teacher selection process. The study investigates the following hypotheses, which are derived from Social Distance Theory (Bogardus, 1925) and the Attraction-Similarity Paradigm (Byrne, 1971). In these frames, age is conceived as a stereotype perception, as well as a shared similarity. Directed hypotheses were used because specific effects were expected to occur.

> H_{a1}: Younger hypothetical applicants for an elementary school teaching position will be rated higher on both dependent variables by elementary school principals than older hypothetical applicants will be rated on both dependent variables by elementary school principals.
>
> H_{a2}: Younger elementary school principals will rate hypothetical applicants for a teaching position higher on both dependent variables than older elementary school principals will rate hypothetical applicants for a teaching position on both dependent variables.
>
> H_{a3}: Older elementary school principals will rate older hypothetical applicants for ateaching position higher on both dependent variables than younger hypothetical applicants, and younger elementary school principals will rate younger hypothetical applicants for a teaching position higher on both dependent variables than older hypothetical applicants.

Literature Review

Early selection studies, termed "macroanalysis," attempted to establish the reliability and validity of the interview and its relationships with criteria, such as intelligence, cognitive tests, level of sociability and sense of humor. These criteria were considered to predict future performance. More recently, interview methods have been modified (e.g., semi-structured and structured interviews), which has resulted in the improvement of the validity of the interview. However, questions still remain about the interview, relative to its power of predictability for future on-the-job performance (Dipboye, 1992;Wagner, 1949). Later research studies, termed "microanalysis," have focused on the whole selection process, identifying factors related to decision-making in each phase. More recently, research has focused on the screening and interview phases (Singer, 1986; Young & McMurry, 1986). These studies have found that non-job-related factors, such as race, sex, age, stereotypes, and disability status, indirectly affect selection decisions. However, none of these characteristics are directly job-related. Therefore, if any of these characteristics influence a selection decision (hiring, promotion, transfer, training, retirement), that decision will be illegal, unless there is an acceptable job-related reason for the discrimination.

Federal legislation, such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the 5th and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution prohibit discrimination in any job situation, relative to specific human characteristics (Young & Ryerson, 1986). This legislation and implementing guidelines from federal and state agencies created "protected classes" of individuals and violation of these statutes and guidelines can lead to federal or state prosecution and litigation against specific companies, government agencies, school districts, and schools.

As employees or job applicants get older, prospects for new jobs or significant promotions are perceived to decrease (Waldman & Avolio, 1986). Some studies focused on whether or not management decisions relative to

promotion, training, and physical capability, were influenced by age of applicants (Lee & Clemons, 1985; Rosen & Jerdee, 1976). Singer (1986) studied age as a stereotype perception relative to specific occupations, including accountants, university academics, police officers, medical doctors, and computer scientists, using hypothetical old and young candidates. Results indicate old applicants were not selected, regardless of their performance and their qualifications.

Research concerning age effects on selection decisions has not been limited to the private sector. Research in teacher selection suggests that discrimination takes place during the selection process, particularly, the screening and interview phases (Johnson, 1976; Young & Allison, 1982; Young & McMurry, 1986). Johnson (1976) conducted the first published study that showed possible age discrimination in teacher selection. He investigated relationships between teacher applicants' age and selection decisions. Results indicate principals and administrators prefer younger applicants to older applicants. Young & Allison (1982) investigated the effect of applicant age and teaching experience on selection. Teaching experience was varied by years; none, 3 years, and 8 years, and two ages (29 years and 49 years) of hypothetical applicants were manipulated. Results showed that regardless of years of teaching experiences, school principals and superintendents tended to select younger applicants. In succeeding studies, Young, in collaboration with other investigators, expanded the scope of his studies, including factors such as specific focal positions, professional qualifications, gender, and level of applicant skill obsolescence (Young & McMurry, 1986).Results show that age of the applicants, either alone or in combination with other factors, influenced rating scores during screening. The older applicants were rated lower than the younger applicants. Studies have focused on age as a factor in selection decisions, but not on reasons why age could be a factor.

Other research streams have attempted to determine what underlying influences affect teacher selection decision processes. In the literature, two theoretical models; (1) social distance theory and (2) attraction-similarity paradigm, have contributed to the studies in the selection process. Social distance theory, first put forth by Bogardus (1925, 1967), attempts to explain interpersonal relations from a cultural perspective. Social distance is based on the levels of comfort members of a culture experience relative to outsiders and is determined by various factors, such as race, religion, nationality, occupation, gender, educational level, etc (Bogardus, 1925; Triandis & Triandis, 1967).

The social distance theory suggests that people work more comfortably with co-workers when they perceive their social distance to be short (Rand & Wexley, 1975; Reis, 1996). Social distance characteristics within cultures or organizations have been shown to create stereotypes related to specific factors such as age or gender. A stereotype creates perceptions that influence the way people evaluate, react, and interact with others. An age stereotype perception can lead to discrimination when people make a decision about older people, not based on individual capabilities (Singer, 1986).

Another theory applying to selection research is the Attraction-Similarity Paradigm, developed by Byrne (1971), to explain interpersonal dynamics within organizations. This paradigm suggests that people who share common characteristics tend to be attracted to or perceive themselves to be similar to each other. Four characteristics influence interpersonal attraction and evaluation. These include: (1) need for affiliation, (2) overt physical characteristics, (3) propinquity (opportunity for close physical proximity), and (4) reciprocal reward and punishment (positive or negative aspects of a relationship-similarity or dissimilarity). Particularly, reciprocal reward (similarity) and punishment (dissimilarity) have a great impact on selection decisions (Rand & Wexley, 1975).

Several studies have investigated the influence of perceived similarity between supervisors and subordinates on characteristics, including competence, overall performance, support, judgment, and quality and number of suggestions. Results suggest that those supervisor-subordinate pairs that perceive themselves to be similar to each other rate each other higher on the factors being studied than do the pairs who perceive themselves as being dissimilar (Pulakos & Wexley, 1983). Studies in teacher selection have shown also that perceived similarity influences selection decisions between teacher applicants and evaluators, such as school principal and superintendents (Young & Joseph, 1989). These studies have had mixed results, with similarity affecting decisions in some studies, but not others. As the positive and negative perceptions about an applicant manifest themselves, through information in an application, resume, and interview, a decision-maker will discern similarity or dissimilarity with the applicant. This may have an effect on the ultimate selection decision.

Methodology

The sample for this study consisted of public elementary school principals of specific ages (39 and 59 years of age), from a midwestern state. Specific principal ages were used to amplify similarity and dissimilarity between applicant and evaluator ages, in keeping with the study's theoretical framework. Of the calculated sample size of 66 principals, determined through a power analysis, 47 useable sets of data (71 %) were obtained. Independent variables in the study are Applicant Age and Evaluator (Principal) Age. Applicant Age is manipulated at 3 levels: 39 years, 59 years, and a "No Age" Control. Evaluator (Principal) Age is set at two levels: 39 years and 59 years. This combination provides for a 3 X 2, fully-crossed factorial design.

Dependent variables are the probability of the applicant receiving an interview (10-point Likert-type scale) and the summation of responses related to 5 areas of teaching knowledge and abilities (4-point Likert-type scales). These included: (1) communication skills, (2) potential overall contribution to the school, (3) disciplinary ability, (4) potential for creating a friendly classroom atmosphere, and (5) professional growth potential (Stallard, 1990; Young & Allison, 1982; Young & Joseph, 1989). The study instruments consist of: (1) a hypothetical elementary teacher position description, based on an actual description, (2) a hypothetical applicant resume, based on an actual documents, and the Applicant Evaluation Form, adapted from studies by Young, et al. (1982, 1989).

A pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability of the Applicant Evaluation Form (Cronbach's Alpha = .86) and to check the manipulation of applicant ages on the resumes (Chi-square = 69.89, df = 2, $p < .01$). Subject packets were randomized so that a principal could receive a resume, with one of three applicant ages, relative to their own age: (1) same age, (2) different age, and (3) no age indicated. Subjects were asked to review the position description and the hypothetical applicant resume and to evaluate the applicant on the Applicant Evaluation Sheet. Follow-up calls and a mailing were made to minimize non-response.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the participating principals are shown in Table 1. The elementary school principals have significant teaching and administrative experience and of these principals, 45 out of 47 stated they used resumes as part of their formal selection processes.

Table 1
Subject Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Range
Teaching Experience (Years)	47	16.93	9.63	4-38
Administrative Experience (Years)	47	10.05	7.44	1-34
Current School	47	485.98	190.71	150-1260
Total Males	25			
Total Females	22			

Results of the univariate analyses of variance and the multivariate analysis of co-variance performed on the study data, are shown in Table 2. To compensate for unequal cell sizes, the General Linear Model was used for data analysis, at the $\alpha = .05$ level. As a result of the experimental manipulations and subsequent analyses, all of the study hypotheses, *as stated*, were rejected at the Alpha = .05 level. However, a significant main effect was detected for Evaluator Age. In terms of practical significance of the result, Evaluator age was found to account for 16% of the variance in the summated score for teaching knowledge and abilities.

Table 2.
Analysis of Covariance Results.

Source	Specific measures of Teacher KSAs			Interview Probability			Multivariate Analysis
	MS	DF	F	MS	DF	F	F
Evaluator Age (A)	35.53	1	5.35*	5.55	1	.97	3.64*
Applicant Age (B)	11.97	2	2.79	14.58	2	2.53	1.54
Mailing (Covariate)	8.24	1	1.24	12.29	1	2.13	1.04
A*B	1.50	2	.59	4.17	2	.72	1.22
Error	6.65	40		5.77	40		
Total		46			46		

N = 47, * $p < .05$ Evaluator Age – $Eta^2 = .16$ (16%)

This study is of limited scope, using age as a single factor, relative to selection discrimination. Results indicate that the age of the school principal influences screening decisions. A significant main effect was found at the multivariate analysis level for Evaluator (principal) Age, in terms of measures of applicants' teaching knowledge and abilities. Younger principals rated applicants lower on this dependent variable than did older principals, regardless of the age of the applicant. No significant main effect was found relative to probability of an applicant receiving an interview. Based on these results, none of the hypotheses, as stated, were supported; age discrimination was not observed in the study. However, further analyses shows that, in comparing younger versus older principals in terms of ratings on measures of teaching knowledge and abilities, for younger and older applicants, principals of both ages rated younger applicants higher than older applicants. These findings show that age discrimination *could possibly* occur during the screening phase. This implies that stereotype perceptions that may be held by the elementary school principals might interfere with the screening decisions. To answer this question, future inquiry is necessary.

The nature of the main effect indicates a significant relationship between Evaluator Age and taking consideration of applicants' professional credentials (teaching knowledge and abilities). Younger principals tend to give less consideration to the professional credentials of both younger and older applicants, preferring, instead, to rely more on the interview. Castetter and Young (2000) provide a caution that selection is often seen as a single event, mostly the interview. If the interview is valid to select the best person for the job, nothing more need be said. However, studies have already shown that discrimination is most likely to occur during both the screening and interview phases of the selection process (Reis, 1996; Young & McMurry, 1986). These results suggest that younger principals should take more consideration of job-related information from applicants during screening and should prepare interviews based on job-related information and professional credentials.

Implications to HRD Issues

The results of this study raise critical issues relative to selection behavior of school principals at the screening and interview phases of the selection system, where selection decisions are most likely to be interfered with by age discrimination. In this regard, the performance improvement of school principals and the selection system is critical to bring a high quality of education into a school. To improve performance, Swanson (1996) states that performance diagnosis, a systematic method to identify a workplace problem and the desirable performance at three levels of performance: organization, process, and individual, is the first step in a performance improvement process. By applying this concept, performance improvement in teacher selection, for elementary school principals, can be provided at the screening phase of the selection process. This section focuses on providing critical performance factors that can help school principals diagnose their performance during the teacher selection process. The performance diagnosis process in this paper involves four phases: (1) articulating an initial purpose, (2) assessing performance variables, (3) performance measures, and (4) performance needs.

Initial Purpose

An initial purpose of performance improvement, for teacher selection during the screening phase, can be identified through examination of problem indicators, types of performance issues, and the target level of performance. Indicators of performance problems include a lack of independence between recruitment and selection, relationships with the board of education and the teacher 's unions, a lack of resources (selection tools and administrative assistance), inconsistencies between job descriptions and position requirements, and misapplication or non-application of selection techniques (Castetter & Young, 2000). Based on these indices, principals should be able to classify performance issues into (1) present problems, (2) improvement, and (3) future requirements, to be examined. The ultimate goal is the improvement of the quality of education in a school; therefore, a performance issue in teacher selection, for school principals, can be classified as improvement. This type of performance issue requires an internal expert, with cooperative efforts. The performance indicators discussed previously involve the three levels of performance: organization (school), process (selection), and individual (principal). However, considering that responsibilities in teacher selection (the entire process and decisions made) require principals to have high competencies and KSAs, and that they are also involved in establishing employment policies and school missions/goals, targeting the individual level (principals) of performance improvement is inevitable for the improvement of teacher selection.

Performance Variables

To assess performance at the screening phase for individual principals, performance variables in Table 3 provide a broad perspective in diagnosing performance. By examining these variables, the principals can identify and understand performance problems and interrelationships among categories at organizational and process levels.

Table 3. Performance Diagnosis Matrix for Teacher Selection Variables

	Organizational Level	Process Level	Individual Level
Mission/ Goal	Fits between Mission/ goals of school and selection.	Goals of selection processes allow principals to attain organizational and their missions/goals.	Congruence between professional mission/ goals and those of individual principals.
Systems Design	Structure and employment policies support desired performance.	A systematic and rational selection process operated independently from other systems.	Roles and responsibilities in selection support principals to achieve their desirable performance.
Capacity	Leadership, funds, culture of the community and the school, and legal requirements to select highly qualified applicants.	The selection process contains all critical factors, such as criteria, timeliness, tools, and administrative resources.	The individual principal's mental, physical, and emotional capacities to carry out tasks in selection.
Motivation	Employment policies (reward systems) foster desirable performance.	All necessary required teacher applicants' information, such as references, an application form, certifications, etc..	Motivation to attain high performance and desire to select qualified personnel into a school.
Expertise	Establishing personnel planning and personnel development programs.	Expertise development and its process responding to any change in selection (legal & position requirements, external labor market, etc.).	KSAs, experience, and competencies of individual principals. Knowledge of teaching positions in the school.

Performance Measures

According to Swanson (1996), specifying performance measures by identifying the related output units of performance at organizational, process, and individual levels, is imperative to change to improve performance. This phase involves three stages: (1) identifying outputs for performance levels, such as the number of highly qualified teacher applicants (school), adequate applicant information and data collected (process), and screening decisions for future interviews (principals). Actual units of performance measures can be the following: (a) time (how soon a position needs to be filled), (b) quantity (how many applicants applied for each vacant teaching position and different types of selection tools available), and (c) quality (highly-qualified applicants, reliable information from applicants, and principal's competencies and KSAs in selection).

Performance Needs

Determining performance needs helps specify needs and interventions for performance improvement, relative to organizational, process, and individual levels. The taxonomy of performance lays in two categories: maintaining the system and changing the system. The results of this study have already shown that quality education in a school can be a function of the ability to identify and select higher performers by individual school principals, through the selection process. The selection process is considered as a series of decisions (Castetter & Young, 2000), and these decisions should be based on teaching credentials and legal requirements. However, school principals sometimes take less consideration of applicants' teaching credentials and are influenced by age-related perceptions, which is implied in this study. However, school principals' decision-making behaviors should be improved to bring quality education into their schools. In these respects, changing the system to advance school principals' competencies and KSAs, as well as improving the selection method, process, and system to a better state or quality would best fit the purpose of this study.

Contribution to HRD Issues in Performance Improvement

Diagnosing school principals' performance has been discussed in this paper, based on a research study in teacher selection and age discrimination. This section summarizes issues in performance improvement for school principals. The diagnosis of performance improvement model contains the four phases: (1) the purpose, (2) performance needs, (3) performance variables, and (4) measuring performance, and each phase has provided particular elements for improvement. School principals have the most difficult position in a school, when solutions to issues rely on their performance improvement, because they are at the top of the organization. Even though numerous studies have focused on teacher applicants, selection methods and processes, there has not been adequate investigation of selection behaviors, specifying school principals. In this regard, this paper is considered to be a challenging study, which provides some insights into performance technologies.

Based on HRD issues discussed through this study, using information from the diagnosis phase should assist elementary school principals in understanding elements for performance improvement. In addition, performance technologists can identify types of interventions to solve performance problems at the organizational (school), process (selection), and individual (principal) levels. However, the results of this study specify general selection behaviors among school principals. In other words, it is difficult to assess actual numbers for performance improvement by applying the diagnosis model to only one small set of data. Therefore, the study focuses exclusively on identifying performance factors for principals and discusses them in the selection context. More importantly, as mentioned previously, this study contributes to expand the domain of HRD issues and performance improvement, specifically in relation to school organizations and school principals with their decision behaviors.

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